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ON TAP

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May Is Water Awareness Month

TCWD'S ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE

On May 1, 2010, the District hosted its fourth annual Open House Celebration at the Administration Office recognizing the month of May as Water Awareness Month. The event was a tremendous success and drew a great crowd of both community and staff family members. It was an opportunity to discuss important issues such as water conservation, water and wastewater treatment processes, and the various services provided by the District, while having a fun time on a Saturday afternoon.

Each year the number of interactive displays seems to increase, with the *Pressure Regulator Display* proving to be extremely popular with the young ones. Another booth that was a big hit was the *Local Top Five California-Friendly Plants* display. These displays are all in an effort to educate in a fun way about the services that the District provides, such as water and wastewater treatment processes, the management of a complex water distribution system, and the benefits of recycling water resources.

The District would like to thank the many representatives from the Orange County Fire Authority, Orange County Sheriff's Department, and the City of Rancho Santa

Margarita for joining in the festivities. Along side the various District-owned vehicles that were on display, their respective emergency response vehicles were a sight to be seen! If you were unable to attend this year, be sure to mark your calendar for the May 2011 celebration. Hope to see you there!

SPEAKING OF PRESSURE REGULATORS...

Water agencies' distribution systems are rated by the California Department of Public Health based on the complexity of the system. The most complex system is considered a Distribution V; the least complex system is a Distribution I. Trabuco Canyon Water District (TCWD) is rated as a Distribution IV system. This is due to the fact that much of the service area within TCWD's boundaries is at high elevations, and severe changes in elevations exist within the system.

By necessity, this creates opportunities for very high and very low water pressures. Many of the water distribution and transmission pipelines that are in the ground have a very high pound per square inch (psi) rating, and pressure reducing valves are located throughout the system.

TCWD's entire water district system is overseen by employees who maintain certification as Distribution IV operators.

Why is this important to you? Many residences throughout the District have pressure delivered to the meters at their residences which are quite high. Unless a residence is in an extraordinarily high elevation zone, the District is required to deliver water at a minimum of 40 psi, but in many cases the pressure at the meter can exceed 100 psi.

Most residences, particularly if they are housing development homes, are equipped with pressure reducing valves or what are commonly called regulators. This is a device that is bell shaped and is typically located below the hose bib in front of the house where the water enters the house through a pipe. These devices operate with a spring and rubber diaphragm mechanism that can wear out after a number of years. TCWD strongly recommends that you acquire a simple water pressure gauge from a local hardware store (the cost is approximately \$10.00) and attach it to your hose bib to measure your water pressure. If the pressure exceeds 75 psi, your water pressure regulator may need to be adjusted, repaired, or replaced. Failure to do so means the copper piping inside your home may be sustaining pressures in excess of what was intended by the builder. The result can mean small pinhole leaks in the piping located in the floor slabs or walls that can result in serious water damage.

Please be reminded that TCWD is not responsible for any water once it passes through the customer's side of the meter. District staff reminds you of the importance of your pressure regulator so that you can be aware of the importance of monitoring

the pressure of the water system inside your home.

WHAT ARE THE LOCAL TOP FIVE CALIFORNIA-FRIENDLY PLANTS?

When speaking with District customers about water conservation, a common question seems to arise, "What are some of the different ways to modify my current landscape in order to make it more water-wise without sacrificing the aesthetic qualities I enjoy?" In an effort to provide some examples of the types of plants best suited for a homeowner's landscape renovation project, District staff visited three local nurseries and presented them with this challenge. At each location, the nursery staff were asked the same question, "What are the top five California-friendly, water-wise plants that you currently sell?"

The response was not only welcoming, but uniquely diverse as well. Each nursery provided a wide variety of colorful plants that could be used for re-landscaping, while maintaining an emphasis on water conservation.

Examples of these water-wise plants are currently on display at the TCWD Administration Office for viewing. If you're considering renovating your home's current landscape, please feel free to stop by and speak to District staff about the *Local Top Five California-friendly Plant Challenge*.

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